Employment

and Social Development

in a Changing Economy

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EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN A CHANGING ECONOMY

Papers presented at CCSD's
"Workshop '85", Ottawa, Ontario

Canadian Council on
Social Development

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FOREWORD

Employment and Social Development in a Changing Economy, the theme of the CCSD's Workshop '85 held in Ottawa in June, focused on the existing scope for local measures to combat continuing high rates of unemployment. Workshop '85 participants included representatives of business, labour, voluntary organizations, and federal and provincial governments. The three papers presented here provide an overview of the range of issues discussed.

"Local Economic Initiative: an Overview," by David Ross, takes as its point of departure the crisis that persistently high unemployment poses for the operation of the post-war welfare state. It goes on to consider how local economic initiatives differ from conventional business and how they can be nurtured to play a greater role in achieving full employment. The portraits of several local initiatives in Canada provide a clear example of what community commitment and enterprise can achieve.

"An Integrated Strategy to Tackle Unemployment in Cornwall and Devon," by Guy Dauncey, outlines the steps taken by the Cornwall and Devon Unemployment Resource Network (CADURN) to generate local

employment and greater community self-reliance. CADURN's aim is to harness resources readily available in the communities of south-eastern England, both to create employment and to help individuals adjust their skills and attitudes to more easily participate in the labour market.

The third paper, "Small Is Possible: Towards A Human-Scale Technology," is provided by George McRobie. He argues that our present economic-industrial system is predicated on centralized mass production made possible by the easy transportation and conversion of hydrocarbons -- our chief source of energy. In his view, transferring this system to third-world countries causes their continuing underdevelopment and vulnerability to uncontrollable economic forces. However, it is not only the third world that is affected. Indeed, Mr. McRobie convincingly shows how maximizing annual corporate income to the detriment of future capital stock perpetuates underdeveloped regional economies in both Canada and the United Kingdom.

For any conference to be a success, many people and organizations must contribute generously. The CCSD wishes to thank the Canadian Association of Adult Education for its contribution in organizing the opening workshop. Mr. Dauncey received assistance from the British Council to participate in Workshop '85. Mr. McRobie's contribution was made possible through his appointment as a Molson Fellow with the Vanier Institute of the Family.

Terrance Hunsley
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

One cannot help but feel redundant when asked to add to the excellent essays in this collection. One of the difficulties of synthesis is that it is a distillation, with the final little drop left not telling very much. Even if the synthesis contains everything, it does not convey nearly enough.

I am intrigued and fascinated. Though not a believer, I am ready to sit in the church of alternate technology and listen more carefully. These papers introduce us to a radical, friendly and innovative approach to the economy that has romantic as well as historical roots. One is reminded of the early cooperatives; of a yearning for the earlier forms of free enterprise; of the effort, self-reliance and pioneer spirit that have sprung up anew after the plague of hugeness brought on by large corporations and robotization. Still, there is the haunting thought that the original sound played on its original instruments may strike our late 20th century ears as thin. We have come a long way since Rochdale, Adam Smith and David Ricardo. A return to past ways may be an attempt to turn the calendar back, but the clock cannot be turned back.

There are a number of beliefs about alternative economies proclaimed in these papers. I refer to them as beliefs, because the proof is only partly available. There is a belief that there will be proof. A belief may be buttressed by a single instance, even if we are warned by the sages that "for instance" is no proof.

Particular illustrations however, serve to excite and interest us. Our reservations and recent experiences make us a little more hard-nosed, which makes us ask for evidence. As each person spoke, I became more convinced that there is an empirical base to these beliefs; that there are enough examples to suggest possibility. I have seen community development corporations at work. Some of them have succeeded where others have failed; and I have wondered, in each instance, why one worked and another one did not.

Aside from a feeling that the truth would be revealed by partial evidence, these papers reflect a clear belief in enterprise, as an organizational possibility and as a technologically feasible ideology. They exhibit a strong belief in limited government which enables and facilitates, but not in government which is able to control. On the other hand, there is a very strong belief in individuals as intelligent, willing, capable or educable, cooperative, and responsible. One of the difficulties in hearing these beliefs is that one is tempted to disagree. I am not sure that human behaviour changes that easily or is so positively productive. My sense is that people are not going to become markedly different and that we are not on the

threshold of a new world. If there was any hint of utopianism, it was in this image of the "new" person. However, this is not synthesis, but an opinion.

Throughout Workshop '85, participants expressed a belief in developing local markets for either a cash or barter economy. I am not sure how all of this will be realized. It reminds me of the old imperial trade discussion of opening up trade with China, despite the fact that we did not know whether there was anything we wanted from China, even if we knew what we would dump on them. Now that China has opened itself up, we have a different picture. In those earlier years, there was a huge imagined market, but it did not have any real meaning. In a similar way, the meaning of local markets needs some elaboration. Several examples of the effectiveness of collectives are given. These groupings are small-scale, not large-scale, such as the European Common Market. Co-ops, community development organizations, and mutual aid groups are representative of the types of economically productive community-based collectives.

The Caisse Populaire is an excellent illustration of a personal-recognizance loan system. Much of what we are talking about in local economic initiatives involves the same kind of system: a recognition that who you are and how we know you becomes the equivalent of collateral. Nothing else is needed.

In localism, and I borrow from Lash, we have "a haven in a heartless world." As a city-dweller, I find it hard to think of

localism as the marvellous thing some people talk about. I also found it difficult to conceptualize of localism when the people at our conference represented the majority sectors of our society. The multiple minorities that exist on the Canadian scene were not represented at Workshop '85; nor did we take them into account in our considerations. Yet they are the people we should be talking about. What is their view about all this? Are we talking in a benign colonial sense? This is one of the issues we might wish to look at in the future.

I think the argument is well made that developing countries should attempt to create their own locally dominated economy to avoid control by multinationals, external aid agencies, and banks. My own experience, though limited, suggests that this offers some positive prospects. Where local people were dependent on the external world, it was not at all useful for them or their economy; they were captive and exploited. Canada has an economy that has been dependent on its extractive and non-processed materials, and also feels exploited, even though it is not a developing country.

These papers are a good critique, sometimes implied, sometimes direct, of the failures of our public policy and of our economy. We are shown how our urban orientation fails to take into account communities and neighbourhoods in cities as well as rural areas, and we are reminded that our attention to this has been insufficient and inadequate. The papers collected here from

Workshop '85 will help us consider more clearly the prospects for local initiatives.

Ralph Garber
President
Canadian Council on Social Development

LOCAL ECONOMIC INITIATIVE: AN OVERVIEW

David P. Ross

For some time the Canadian Council on Social Development has been concerned that the fundamental assumption on which the well-functioning of the welfare state is founded can no longer be taken for granted. This assumption is full employment. In the post World War II era of sustained economic growth, a free enterprise system assisted by selective government intervention has provided unprecedented increases in material prosperity. Most of this prosperity has been associated with the expansion of stable, well-paying employment opportunities. Individuals and households unable to get aboard the economic juggernaut have improved their standard through welfare-state social security provisions such as Old Age Assistance, Canada/Quebec Pension Plans, social assistance, unemployment insurance, family allowances, child tax credits, public housing and medicare.

The welfare state worked reasonably well as long as the overwhelming majority of Canadians drew social and income security through their expanding paycheques. But as unemployment increased during the 1970s and remained high in the 1980s, and as economic growth slowed, governments found it increasingly difficult to accept (or to pass

on to taxpayers) the growing costs of publicly-assisted social programs.

Now we witness sustained attempts to cut back on hard-won and previously accepted social security practices and benefit levels. The elderly are asked to forego full indexation of the universal Old Age Security (OAS) pension - the cornerstone of Canada's pension system. Full indexation of family allowances is no longer deemed possible. We question whether maternity benefits should be part of our social insurance system. Unemployment insurance recipients are increasingly suspected of being idle loafers, and the whole UI scheme is in danger of becoming a welfare program based on need rather than an insurance program based on entitlement and right. Social assistance, administered by the provinces, is undergoing cut-backs to such an extent that single individuals in some provinces receive about $100 per month to take care of all their needs. Doctors are opting out of the formerly universal health care system, and hospitals are increasingly resorting to fund-raising charity drives to cover deficits. The federal government is withdrawing from the provision of social housing, and provincial governments are squeezing post-secondary educational institutions and closing public schools.

This is the crisis of the welfare state. At the centre of this crisis is the quality and quantity of employment opportunities. No longer able to assume that the traditional mixed economy can provide full employment and sustain welfare state activity at expected levels, we must now seek new ways to attain both full employment and provide

income security. One promising avenue is local economic initiative.

Local economic initiative (LEI) is a process amalgamating economic and social concerns.

The process is based on unconventional business activity. To define unconventional we can contrast LEI activity with five criteria commonly used to describe conventional, commercial business activity:

1) motive
2) financing
3) structure
4) organization
5) nature of output

Motive

The motives for establishing a LEI enterprise are varied, but invariably differ from the profit motive of conventional businesses. Strong social or environmental motives are often the reason for starting a LEI enterprise. For example: persistently high unemployment rates; regional depression, frequently caused when a major company closes down or a natural resource is depleted; chronic employment difficulties confronted by groups such as the disabled, mothers on welfare or natives; lack of local training opportunities; inadequate provision of basic needs; or a desire to do something creative in and for the community.

Example: There is a restaurant in Ottawa, established by a community development association that attempts to fill a crucial neighbourhood need for training and work-experience opportunities for disadvantaged youth. The motive is social, but the means

is a commercial restaurant that provides 22 weeks of on-the-job training in food preparation, food service and bartending skills. It relies on a government Job Corps grant supplemented by revenue from the operation of the restaurant.

It is hard to imagine a conventional business establishing itself to train disadvantaged youth in a low-income neighbourhood. What is novel about this restaurant is that a community organization has attempted to merge private economic objectives and public social concerns through a community-owned business that is not entirely guided by profits. The public grant permits the restaurant management to make some decisions based on social factors, but the revenue from the restaurant's patrons gives the business a degree of long-term independence plus criteria to judge whether the business side of the operation is succeeding.

The degree to which local economic activity can, or wants to, meet difficult social needs at the expense of conventional business practices and profitability will, in most cases, depend on the proportion of public money to earned revenue (measured as shares of the business's total revenue). In some cases, social needs can be met entirely through operating revenues with no ongoing public money being necessary. But generally, the more difficult the social need, the greater the requirement will be for public money.

A strong case can be made for continued public support of particular local economic initiatives when these initiatives are dealing with social and environmental

concerns. The costs of social and environmental problems which inevitably arise because of the way traditional commercial enterprises conduct business, are ultimately assumed by the state, the voluntary sector or the public at large.

Two societal costs result from problems like unemployment, drug abuse, alienation, marital distress, crime, poverty, ill health, industrial accidents and pollution. The first cost is a reduction in the quality of life for the general public. Unresolved problems inevitably impose costs on the public in the form of aberrant and threatening behaviour, drunk driving, crime and child abuse, to give but a few examples.

The second cost is money to resolve the problem. Canada now spends about $40 billion annually on social programs. Not all this money is designed to alleviate downstream social problems. Still, it is legitimate to ask why we ought not transfer at least several billion dollars each year in an attempt to tackle some social problems upstream, through the local economic initiative process. If local economic initiative can prevent some social problems and their associated costs, it makes sense to supplement the commercial revenues earned by local enterprises with a sizeable portion of social funding. Clearly, assistance to local economic initiative does not require a net increase in government spending. Rather, it is a more effective and preventive upstream allocation of limited public funds.

Financing

Conventional businesses obtain their venture capital or start-up funds from commercial banks, owner and family investments, or public shares. But LEI enterprises more frequently rely on government through job creation, training, regional development and social service project funds. Social entrepreneurs often develop ingenious combinations of public and private financing.

There is evidence that some credit unions are increasingly willing to support LEI, although banks remain steadfastly indifferent to this type of economic initiative. Funds can also be raised by individual subscription and local group donations. As well, municipalities are becoming increasingly involved in local initiatives that were originally dominated by the federal and, later, provincial governments.

In unconventional small business, worker co-ops and collectives, a substantial amount of seed money comes from the participants themselves. Local community and church groups, as well as conventional businesses, have also supplied non-financial resources -- space, material and business expertise. A local economic initiative needs to be exceedingly creative in putting together complex financing packages.

Example: In Vancouver, a popular restaurant raised its start-up capital through workers' contributions; a loan from an interest-free credit union (which in itself is an unconventional financial institution specializing in the funding of workers co-ops); and the

sale of memberships to the public who receive a discount when they dine at the restaurant. A further elaboration of this kind of successful unconventional business could include the restaurant purchasing much of its produce and supplies from other enterprises created through local initiative, thereby creating a market for other unconventional businesses.

Structure

Most conventional businesses have fairly predictable and well-defined single proprietorship, partnership or limited liability corporation structures. However, there is no typical structure that results from local economic initiative, and new forms are constantly being developed. But some identifiable structures frequently found include: worker co-ops, collectives, community development corporations, community enterprise centres, unconventional small businesses, business components of voluntary organizations, intentional communities, barter groups, and organized skills-exchanges. Credit unions will sometimes be associated with the funding element of the LEI process.

Example: There is a community development corporation in Nanaimo that has set up a separate investment arm which concentrates solely on investing capital in promising local enterprises. The investment arm can choose the mix of social, environmental and economic concerns it wishes to support as long as the overall investment portfolio sustains itself. Uneconomic but socially profitable enterprises can thus be subsidized from the profits of purely

economic enterprises. In this unconventional business structure, the semi-autonomous investment arm assures the long-term viability of the community corporation, while the parent corporation assures that its investments and proceeds are partially directed towards alleviating the community's social and environmental needs.

Organization

The organization of local economic initiative businesses is likely to differ on three accounts from traditional business: work practices and scheduling; management and decision-making; and distribution of rewards.

Workstyles in LEI enterprises are more flexible. One of the motivations behind the creation of such an enterprise is to recognize that people require different workstyles and schedules. However, unless participants in LEIs have a direct voice in the planning of work organization, significant flexibility and workstyle diversity are unlikely to be achieved. This is not to say that all hierarchical authority and work discipline is abandoned for purely consensual approaches and workplace anarchy. Discipline and authority come, but only after participants have democratically arrived at workstyle decisions. Further adjustments can be made as needs change.

An important organizational element that generally sets LEI businesses apart from conventional businesses is that the distribution of rewards, principally wages, is more equal. The reward structure

represents the results of decisions taken by the participants. It is not decreed by so-called market forces, as in conventional businesses, although prevailing wage rates will play a role, as will wage guidelines set by any government funding program.

Example: In Ottawa, there is a multi-cultural catering service established and run by immigrant women as part of a women's multi-cultural centre, which itself is partially funded by government grants. The commercial catering service is an outgrowth of the initial social purpose of the centre. Several women, from widely varied cultures, decided that together they could provide a highly mixed catering menu. What is of interest here is that the women can prepare meals, some at home, according to a flexible schedule that fits around their family and community responsibilities.

Nature of output

Conventional businesses seek the most profitable market opportunities. An LEI business may incorporate profitable ventures, but most LEIs will produce basic goods and services which are in short supply in the local community, and are often ignored by the private and public sectors. LEI enterprises will seek opportunities that yield high social profits, not necessarily high commercial profits. Since 20 per cent of Canadian households receive only four per cent of Canada's total income, most of these two million households cannot afford to pay commercial prices for basic needs. Consequently, LEI businesses frequently establish themselves to fill this neglected niche in the marketplace.

Example: In Ottawa, and at least one other Ontario location, an enterprise has chosen to produce comfort clothing for people with disabilities. Since a large portion of the disabled population in Canada is geographically fragmented and has low incomes, the commercial sector has never paid attention to their special clothing needs. This is not a natural type of product for conventional businesses, but it is for LEIs.

In Sydney, Nova Scotia, a community corporation has funded a dental clinic. While free market forces did not attract adequate and needed dental care to Sydney, the local community-owned corporation did so because it was not seeking the maximum returns that dentists could find only in the Halifax area.

Conclusion

It should be stressed that a LEI enterprise need not meet all of the criteria we have used to define unconventional business. When is a business no longer conventional? If an enterprise meets three of the criteria it would probably be considered an LEI.

In slightly more abstract terms, if an enterprise is small, uses cheap and understandable technology, is labour intensive and uses social accounting as its operating rationale, then it qualifies as the type of economic initiative that should be encouraged in order to ameliorate our growing economic, environmental and social problems. It is through community-oriented economic initiatives and the people they attract that we may be able to permanently resolve the crisis of the welfare state.

AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY TO TACKLE UNEMPLOYMENT IN CORNWALL AND DEVON

Guy Dauncey

The Cornwall and Devon Unemployment Resource Network (CADURN) is an independent network of groups, initiatives, and people who share a desire to tackle the problems of unemployment in Cornwall and Devon in a practical, positive and transformative way.

The network was formed in January 1983, and involves around 90 member groups. It is a small organization with big ambitions. It has a committee elected annually, on which unemployed people must hold at least half of the seats.

CADURN prepared this strategy paper because it believes that if the problems of unemployment are to be tackled successfully, we will need to reach for new levels of response, debate and action.

Unemployment in the two countries

Unemployment in Devon is close to the UK national average of 13.2%; in Cornwall it stands at 18.1%. At its seasonal low, the percentage out of work is 11%, while in winter the percentage out of work rises to

29% in some areas. We share a problem which assails all of Britain, and other European countries.

We do not believe that there are any simple solutions to the problem. We believe that while changes in government policy could make a significant impact on the situation in the short-term, the underlying trend is towards steadily-increasing rates of unemployment, as (1) the processes of automation take effect, and (2) competition from the newly developing countries cuts steadily into traditional home markets and UK export markets.

We believe that our high levels of unemployment are primarily an effect of the sudden ending of the industrial age. A parallel can be drawn between the "clearances" which threw people off the land in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the modern-day clearances which are throwing people out of their traditional employment in factories and workplaces. It is a painful process, but we do not seek a return to the past.

What can be done?

We share with Professor Leaper, Chairman of the Cornwall and Devon Area Board of the Manpower Services Commission, the opinion that "there is no one simple solution to long-term unemployment ... we need now a coordinated strategy to promote (all these) different measures -- and others -- to reduce the major social problem. Its continuation threatens the fabric of society."

CADURN believes that change is best begun, whenever possible, where people live, not in distant administrative centres: ours is a bottom-up approach. We heed the call for an overall Cornwall and Devon Development Agency, which might well achieve some things of value. This is a top-down approach, however, and without secure roots in the localities where unemployment is a problem and where unemployed people live, there will be definite limits on its ability to achieve major practical successes.

In this paper we present our ideas concerning the possible shape of an integrated local strategy which could be pursued in the cities, towns and rural regions all over Cornwall and Devon, and of an integrated regional strategy operating at the two-county level to support and assist the local strategies.

In view of our belief that "things are changing," we present as an Appendix an overview of some of the major attitudinal changes which are occurring. These changes in our basic assumptions about the way things are underpin this strategy paper.

AN INTEGRATED LOCAL STRATEGY

Recent historical background

Severe levels of unemployment have been with us since 1979. In the years since then, three stages of response to the problem have been apparent in the UK:

STAGE 1: 1979-1981. In general, people were hoping during these years that the problem would go away once the economy

picked up. Few practical initiatives were taken apart from the government's Job Creation Programme, Youth Opportunities Programme and the Special Temporary Employment Programme (STEP). Almost no local initiatives were taken.

STAGE 2: 1981-PRESENT. By 1981 there were many signs that unemployment levels were not going to fall even with a pick-up in the economy. The true impact of technological change was by then being realized, and its implications were sinking in: economic growth no longer guaranteed any increase in employment -- and in certain sectors of the economy, it required the exact opposite: a planned fall in employment.

In a conscious response to this new scenario, a new wave of positive local responses appeared all over Britain: enterprise agencies, unemployment centres, business training courses, self-help groups, local employment action groups, voluntary projects, enterprise workshops and cooperative development agencies. These initiatives have laid the groundwork for the strategy which is proposed in this paper. They have shown that there are many creative ways to move forward. A limiting factor, however, has been that these efforts have usually operated in isolation from other initiatives or from any coordinated policy framework at either the local or the regional level.

In Devon and Cornwall we have seen many examples of Stage 2 initiatives:

East Devon Small Industries Group
Third Age Project
Enterprise Exmouth

Totnes Business Development Centre
Plymouth Cooperative Development Agency
Bideford's Bakehouse and Skillswap projects
Churches Enterprise Group, Tiverton
Instant Muscle, Braunton
Culm Valley Activities Centre, Uffculme
Breadline, Penzance
North Devon Enterprise Group
Torquay TUC Centre for the Unemployed

In addition to this listing of a few sample Stage 2 initiatives, there are the Manpower Service Commission's (MSC) Community Programme and Youth Training Schemes, the various Community Programme Agencies and other major MSC schemes and programs, as well as county-level policy initiatives designed to ease the situation.

STAGE 3: 1983-PRESENT. As a response to the effective isolation of most Stage 2 initiatives, voluntary groups and other local agencies have evolved multi-project and partnership approaches, which can be termed Stage 3 responses to the problem.

Typically, a Stage 3 initiative might combine a YTS scheme, a Community Program scheme, an Enterprise Agency and an Enterprise Workshop, within the coordinative control of one managing board. Examples of such initiatives can be found in Swale (Kent), South Bristol, Pleck (Walsall), Bathgate (Lothian), Barnsley, Leeds, Nottingham, Wiltshire, Hammersmith, Fulham and many other places.

Almost without exception, the critical factor in ensuring the success of a Stage 3 project or approach is the active support

and involvement of the local authority and of other concerned sectors of the community, including churches, the local business community, councils for voluntary service, community groups, unemployed groups, the MSC, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), the careers service, community education, local colleges, trades councils, citizens advice bureaus and local charitable organizations. Without local authority support and assistance the Stage 3 projects would not have developed to the degree that they have.

Stage 3 initiatives generally elicit a high degree of support within the local community. Moreover, they bring a degree of awareness, enthusiasm and hope to the people involved. In our own part of the country, both the Breadline (Penzance) and Bakehouse (Bideford) projects have been struggling towards a Stage 3 approach, but in the face of considerable institutional inertia.

In South Devon, under the auspices of the Dartington Institute of Community Studies, a local business development service, a Community Programme agency and a network of groups for older unemployed and early retired people have been set up in close conjunction with each other.

In many parts of the UK, local responses to the problems of unemployment are evolving at a rapid rate. Progressive innovations can be seen from month to month. Experience is being gathered and lessons are being learned. The two counties of Cornwall and Devon have been missing out, until now.

However, as in the field of computer development, there are advantages to be gained by delay, if the opportunity is taken to learn valuable lessons from others. Stage 3 initiatives still fall far short of tackling the overall problem of unemployment in a coherent manner: they are only evolutionary steps along the way. In Cornwall and Devon we have the chance to move several steps ahead all at once.

The critical question which arises is **"Can there be a fourth stage of initiatives?"**

One of the critical assumptions behind this strategy paper is that unemployment is a massively large problem, and that it can only be solved if all sections of the community play active roles in an overall integrated approach.

We recognize a slightly unpalatable truth: that the 85% of the working population which has relatively secure work is basically comfortable, and wishes to forget all about the problems of unemployment. Any moves to ghetto-ize the problem are unconsciously welcome to the securely employed, since it allows them to continue to bury their heads in the sand and to tell themselves that someone else is looking after the problem, be it the MSC or a local Stage 2 initiative. This judgement is not meant critically. It is simply the recognition of a natural part of human nature. We all want to live comfortably if we can, and to avoid looking at uncomfortable truths. Prejudice against unemployed people (e.g., "They could all get work if they really tried") plays a large role in this constant war against the truth. However, if we are to live an honest

life in a caring way, and if we wish to see our children grow up in a meaningful and a rewarding way, we must recognize the deep nature of the problems facing us, and play our part in efforts to overcome them.

WHAT MIGHT A FULLY INTEGRATED APPROACH LOOK LIKE?

Diagram 1 shows 12 areas for initiatives at the local level. The essential nature of a local strategy is that it is local; each local strategy will therefore be different, reflecting different local needs and realities. Still, some general idea of the kind of practical initiatives which must be involved can be given.

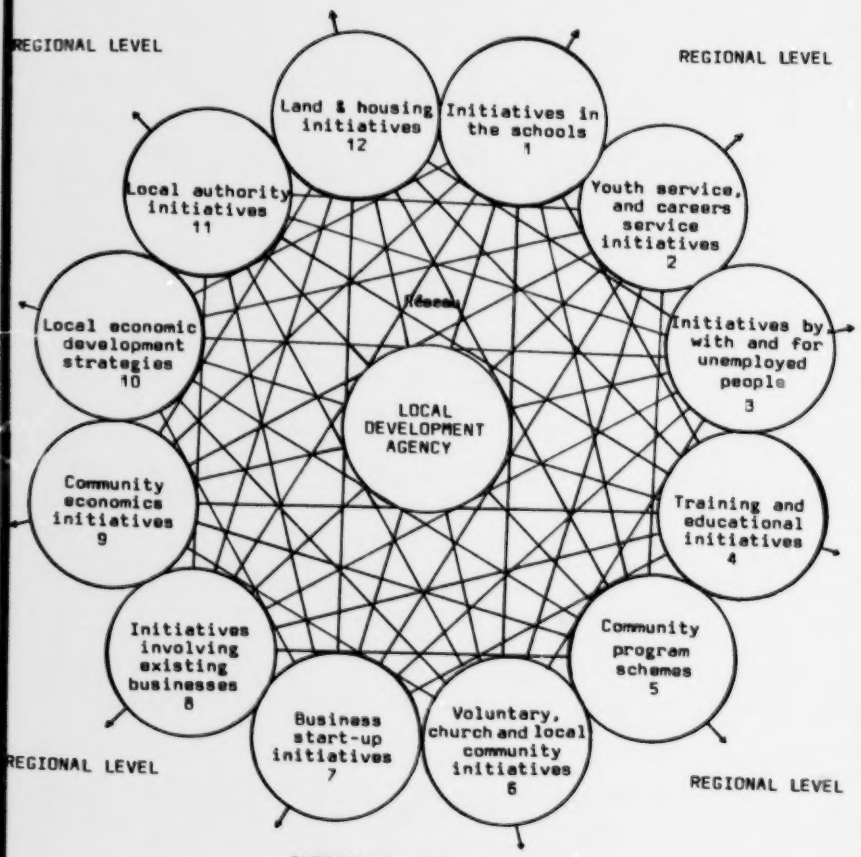
An integrated strategy is able to combine a number of different initiatives in various areas of local life. Both the initial coordination of efforts and joint discussion about future developments can be achieved by the establishment of a local unemployment network, or working party, involved in the field.

This type of group could be based on an existing organization, such as an Enterprise Agency or a District Council. Experience in other places shows that a new body with a managing board drawing its strength and representation from all sections of the community (including the council) may sometimes be better placed to act with the creativity and imagination required.

Aspect 1: Initiatives in the schools

Our current schooling system still prepares a large number of children for work that no

DIAGRAM 1


REGIONAL LEVEL
REGIONAL LEVEL
Land & housing initiatives 12
Initiatives in the schools 1
Local authority initiatives 11
Youth service, and careers service initiatives 2
Local economic development strategies 10
Initiatives by with and for unemployed people 3
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Community economics initiatives 9
Training and educational initiatives 4
Initiatives involving existing businesses 8
Community program schemes 5
Business start-up initiatives 7
Voluntary, church and local community initiatives 6
REGIONAL LEVEL
REGIONAL LEVEL

INTEGRATED LOCAL STRATEGY

TO TACKLE UNEMPLOYMENT

longer exists. The nature of the exam system is such that it brands as successes the ones who will go on to higher things, and as failures the ones who are to work in unskilled jobs and in the factories -- factories which no longer need so many workers.

New initiatives in the schools have young people learning enterprise skills through running their own cooperatives and businesses. These enterprises encourage initiative, self-organization and responsibility, and work in a "real world" context, which is very appealing to the young.

Similar efforts are still comparatively rare in Cornwall and Devon. However, 1986 is Industry Year, and the Royal Society of Arts with the Department of Trade and Industry have declared that they want to see an enterprise venture in every school before the year is out. This is a big opportunity, if we accept the challenge.

Aspect 2: Youth service, youth training schemes and careers service initiatives

The two critical components of a relevant youth strategy must be (1) ensuring the high quality of youth training schemes, which includes taking steps to continue the development of initiative skills as well as work-specific skills; and (2) the provision of a meaningful post-youth training scheme strategy. Even with a two-year scheme, we will still have a large number of young people aged 18 to 25 who will be unemployed.

Our present approach to this age-group is almost non-existent. Are we really willing to sit back and watch our youngsters waste such a critical period of their lives? There is much that can be done.

Drawing on the experience of successful youth projects here in the south-west and in the rest of Britain, a successful strategy would include the following components:

*Personal one-to-one support from an adult. This helps with the process of job-hunting, and provides practical encouragement for young people to lead active, useful and meaningful lives while they are unemployed. Capital Jobmate, in London (modelled on an approach pioneered here in the west country, under the name "Just the Job," between 1977 and 1980), provides a good working model of this support.

*A working definition of success that is not dependent on a job or full-time training.

*Access to facilities for the development of personal skills, hobbies, sports, artistic activities, community activities, money-earning activities, self-employment and group activities.

*The provision of a satisfactory place to meet.

*The provision of a wide range of skills courses at the local college.

*The provision of some separate courses and groups, with daycare facilities, for young unemployed women, who are often intimidated by dominantly male projects and activities.

*The development of an integrated youth in business program comprising several necessary components such as practical encouragement, training courses, personal support, small start-up grants and sheltered workspace. Britain is full of successful new initiatives to help young people set up their own businesses -- it is time that Cornwall and Devon became more actively involved.

*Direct young people's involvement in the control and decision-making processes of the strategy.

The youth and community services clearly have important roles to play in all of this. The role of the careers service must be to provide a supportive framework in which young people can succeed by developing their own lives without having to experience a spell of unemployment as a period of acute boredom, and loss of self-respect and skills. There are many valuable skills which can be acquired while young people are unemployed. And skills relevant to the needs of many employers can be reflected in job applications, personal information charts and in interviews.

The development of this kind of active approach has staff training implications for the careers service, the youth service and community education workers.

Aspect 3: Initiatives by, with and for unemployed people

Practical experience over the last five years shows that where support is forthcoming from the local community, initiatives

started by unemployed people themselves can go a long way towards meeting their needs. Self-help groups, local action initiatives, benefits take-up campaigns, drop-in centres, women's projects and community workshops have all proved their success, given a back-up network of support within the local community. This back-up involves training, access to resources, and respect. Projects started by unemployed people are very fragile affairs, easily defeated or destroyed. Yet, potentially, such initiatives harbour the seeds of practical action in which unemployed people take positive steps to meet their own needs. Staff working with new programs such as Replan, and appointed through the Educational Support Grant system to work with unemployed people, will be able to nourish and assist these efforts if they learn to approach them with respect and sensitivity.

Initiatives also need to be taken for people whose long-term unemployment has begun to tax their personal hope and will-power. Social services, probation, health services, adult education, the churches and local voluntary bodies all have an important role to play. Training is also required for workers in these agencies.

The disempowerment of unemployed people begins at the DHSS, and often continues, agency by agency, from then onwards. There is much that can be done to improve the relationship between claimants and the DHSS, such as:

*The establishment of local consultative committees;

*Stand-by schemes, which allow unemployed people to earn more than allowed and store the surplus as cash credits where the intention is to work towards the development of a business;

*The issuing of relevant codes of conduct from the regional DHSS office to encourage good practice and friendly, polite relationships.

For many unemployed people in the south-west, transportation is their biggest problem. This has been a problem for many years. We have nothing magic to pull out of our hat, but we do suggest that if local networks were to set up working groups to consider options, it might be possible to maximize the use of school buses, minibuses, getting lifts, cut price schemes on local buses, and bicycle pools.

Aspect 4: Training and educational initiatives

A period of passive unemployment is very often a period of acute deskilling. The need to provide courses and appropriate educational provisions for unemployed people should top the agenda of all educators and trainers. Proper coordination is needed between the MSC, local colleges and schools, and adult education departments. Each local area ought to establish a special area consortium to ensure coordination. The MSC Area Board could encourage more participation in the development of its Adult Education Strategy, by promoting conferences, consultations and discussion papers.

Successful experiences elsewhere indicate that the following initiatives are needed:

* The removal of effective constraints and obstacles to easy participation in existing courses and provisions;

* The provision of courses for no charge;

* The provision of a wide range of 21-hour courses (DHSS rules forbid welfare recipients to study more than 21 hours a week), and of tailor-made courses to meet needs as they emerge from different local initiatives;

* The provision of day care where it is required to encourage more women to become involved;

* The provision of appropriate courses for people on 3 and 4-day community programs;

* The provision of personal life-planning courses, to assist unemployed people to develop command over their own lives, skills, activities and personal development;

* The provision of jobhunting courses, and of regular jobhunting groups, which are run very successfully by the Durham Jobcentre;

* Volunteer Action Training Courses designed to develop leadership skills among unemployed people, in order to encourage new projects (as run in Irvine, Scotland, by the Community Education team);

* The establishment of community workshops (as has been done in Uffculme, Bovey Tracey

and Bideford) to allow unemployed people free access to tools and equipment to develop skills and ideas;

* Thorough publicity for all courses and groups.

The intention behind these provisions is that people should be able to approach a period of unemployment as a period of skill development and learning, which will assist them in their future lives and jobs. Our current situation is the exact reverse -- at one of the few times in life when the opportunity exists to learn and to develop new skills without the impediment of the demands of work, our lack of provisions encourages unemployed people to retreat into the isolation of their own fears and feelings of inadequacy. A well-run consortium can reverse this process, if it tackles the issue with imagination. The impact on the lives of unemployed people would be enormous.

There is a price for some (but not all) of these requirements. This has to be faced. Yet, all of the suggestions listed above are already being carried out fully in other parts of the country. Remember, there is also a big price for the cost of continuing unemployment.

Aspect 5: Community programme schemes

The Community Programme (CP) is with us to stay, and our energies must therefore be devoted to ensuring that schemes provided under the Programme are of the highest quality.

The existing schemes are provided within the context of a limited Stage 2 provision, in which schemes were not intended to inter-relate with other initiatives to tackle unemployment locally.

In the context of an integrated local strategy to tackle unemployment, such as CADURN is proposing, the Community Programme must ensure that its schemes:

(1) Meet the expressed needs of unemployed people for skill-development;

(2) Make good provision for both on-the-job and off-the-job training;

(3) Are backed up by access to life-planning courses, so that individuals are able to maximize the opportunity which CP schemes offer them to develop better control over their lives and goals.

Evidence from different CP schemes around the UK shows that the quality of personal attention given to a participant's future career and life development can make all the difference between a 30% and a 70% job placement record. A scheme with only a 30% record tends to experience a distinct collapse of morale from the eighth month onwards. A scheme with a 70% record does not suffer the same collapse.

If a CP agency is to play a full role in an integrated local strategy, it will need to develop a governing framework which is locally responsive. People whose lives are intimately tied up with unemployment initiatives ought to be involved in the decision-making of the agency. After all,

public money is involved. A local community ought to be able to feel that the agency is "our agency," and not experience it as another large and alien body.

This implies the encouragement of smaller agencies, and the breaking up of larger ones. There should be one agency for each district council area and a requirement by the MSC that worker representatives should be included in agency policy groups.

Moreover, in light of difficulties that have been experienced by agencies, a forum is needed to facilitate serious discussion between the MSC Area Board and representatives of agencies and other customers. Projects need longer timetables, longer assured lives, longer notice of policy changes, less stop/start behaviour, clearer guidelines, wider interpretation of the phrase "of direct tangible benefit," greater provision for the development of new skills and simplified paperwork. Overall, this adds up to a call for the democratization of the MSC.

Aspect 6: Voluntary, church and local community initiatives

Some of the region's most exciting measures to tackle unemployment have come from these sectors of the community -- the Uffculme Trust, Breadline in Penzance and the Attic Workshop project in Bodmin being good examples. In other parts of the country, local community groups have converted large disused factories (for example, Pallion Enterprises in Sunderland) into multi-use business, training and leisure centres; set

up their own community business operations (as in Easterhouse, Glasgow); and started resource workshops (such as the Coventry Workshop, set up by the Bitteswell Employment Alliance).

However, for each effort that succeeds there are probably 10 which fail to deliver the goods. The reasons for this huge loss-rate are simple. Local agencies and local authorities are not familiar with the needs of such groups, and can often kill a project unwittingly, simply through a lack of sensitivity. The brilliant skillswap scheme in Cwmbran, which at the height of its success involved over 400 unemployed people in its activities, was effectively killed by insensitive local authority policy.

There are clear policy messages here for agencies and councils. These are discussed in detail in the 1984 report **Joint Action - The Way Forward** produced by the Working Party on Local Economic Initiatives.

The report is based on a detailed survey of local authority initiatives with the voluntary sector throughout Britain. It confirms our worries in CADURN that Cornwall and Devon are getting left behind in what is a fast-developing field. The report is full of detailed practical recommendations, including calls for:

* Greater use of Section 137 funding (allows local governments to raise rates by 2 pence on the pound to support new economic ventures);

* Setting up community initiative funds to provide small grants to cover the cost of

feasibility, research and planning exercises for new enterprises and projects, and to help new initiatives to get going;

* Setting up local skills and resources banks.

Aspect 7: Business start-up initiatives

The future of our communities and of our region depends upon the successful creation of new local businesses.

In past decades, we have been content to rely upon the existing business community to look after itself and to satisfy the employment needs of the community. The impact of the new technologies means that the old equation which connected economic growth and jobs has been broken. Employers can now race ahead with expansion plans which will not generate more local employment.

Over the past five years, successful track records have been established for a wide variety of business start-up projects.

We are witnessing the emergence of a new social ethic with regard to business, which says that the success of a local business is very much the concern of the local community, and that anything which can be done to ensure a business's success should certainly be done.

One of the truly exciting things about this emerging web of community support for business is that it has a definite impact upon the success/failure ratio of start-

ups. The failure rate for cooperatives which are supported by Cooperative Development Agencies has been estimated at 5% a year, which is substantially better than the figure quoted by the Department of Industry for all new businesses.

The cost of local business start-up initiatives is impressive, too. For example, each new job at British Leyland is estimated to cost around $1,200,000, each Enterprise Zone job to cost $80,000, and each Scottish Development Agency job to cost $10,000. The comparative figures for local employment initiatives range from a remarkable $460 per new job with the Bedfordshire and Chiltern Enterprise Agency, to $1,800 per job with the Scottish Cooperatives Development Committee, to $4,000 per job with the West Midlands County Council Economic Development Committee.

This important correlation of local focus and low cost is possible because the more local an initiative, the more it is able to draw on community goodwill and voluntary effort. More distant initiatives rarely inspire this same attitude of goodwill.

Aspect 8: Initiatives involving existing businesses

In Bristol, the New Work Trust has established a special marketing centre to meet the needs of small businesses which cannot afford their own marketing departments, or the services of expensive consultants.

In Neath, a special programs unit drew together local business people to consider how they could help develop Neath as a whole, with rather successful results.

The Bathgate local enterprise agency (BASE) is challenging local businesses to double their volume within five years by improving their business methods and drawing up three year plans.

In St. Austell, English China Clays have supported a new project to establish a community resource centre, which will embrace many innovative schemes involving unemployed people.

If local business people begin to meet together, they can:

* define their own needs for training, marketing expertise, or computer facilities;

* establish a resource bank of spare materials and equipment which can be made available to the local community;

* begin to consider more active ways to assist the local community, such as establishing a local "Business in the Community" group.

Aspect 9: Community economic initiatives

Community economics is a new area of interest and exemplifies some of the creative thinking induced by severe unemployment. It considers such matters as community wealth, the development of locally-controlled community businesses, the

formation of credit unions, the possibilities of new forms of local currency, measures to share work that is available locally, and the use of local investment funds and finance houses to direct local savings into specific local development projects.

It also raises possibilities that are critically important, in view of the need to replace the typical "cowboy economy" approach of the last 200 years with a more resource-conscious and planet-conscious "spaceship economy" model for local economic stability and growth.

When taken in combination with ideas from community economics, we begin to see the possibilities of new community-based wealth being generated. In older dictionaries, wealth is defined as a state of happiness, prosperity and well-being. We need to consciously recognize that for life to be meaningful and rich, we have to think in terms of a whole community's wealth, and not only in terms of our individual wealth, as we have become accustomed to doing during the industrial age. Clearly, our pursuit of wealth must enable all members of the community to enjoy the natural rewards of work and activity. At CADURN, we believe that this goal is within our grasp, if we choose to reach for it.

Aspect 10: Local economic development strategies

It is clear that local economic development is an essential component of any local strategy. Planning has traditionally been

left to county councils and district councils. Generally, their work has been restricted to the conventional matters of making land available for development and seeking to attract new businesses.

The CADURN strategy suggests that, as part of the task of welcoming the post-industrial age, of tackling unemployment and of assuming active responsibility for the future of our own lives, we need to encourage new plans for the places where we live. And one major component of this must be economic development. Local Development Agencies would be well-placed to set such planning processes in motion, in liaison with district and county council planning departments.

Community planning should also involve members of the local community in considering future developments. What is needed is the generation of new visions for the future. The familiar processes by which structure plans and local development plans are drawn up do not involve local people enough to enable true community planning to occur. There are good models from other areas of Britain to draw on -- there is no need to fear that such an idea is untried, or cannot work. COMMUNITY PLANNING CAN AWAKEN NEW IDEAS, IMAGINATION AND VISION IN LOCAL PEOPLE. The Working Party on Local Economic Initiatives referred to earlier, reports that a consultative exercise carried out in one county produced 58 feasible ideas for community-based employment initiatives. They quote from a county council report:

> One of the unemployed people whom we consulted said to us "We have a huge

force of people with talent, skills, energy and and ideas and it's all going to waste." The county council also has a huge force of people with talent, skills, energy and ideas. It would be an even greater waste if the two could not be brought together to the positive benefit of all.

Aspect 11: Local authority initiatives

Over the last two years, local authorities in the UK have discovered a new realm for activity: economic development. No longer satisfied with the old role of being the publicist for the special charms, rebates and incentives, of each city or county, authorities have begun to explore in earnest how economic development can happen.

Local, district and county councils have established enterprise agencies, marketing centres, rural workshops, business start-up funds, enterprise boards, cooperative development agencies and community economic development officers. Section 137 funding is generally under-used, and could provide financing for new initiatives.

CADURN believes that local strategies, local networks and local agencies are needed to tackle unemployment. Town, parish and district councils must be involved, along with other concerned groups. We are hopeful that the new councils elected in May 1985, will be eager to explore new ways of fighting unemployment.

Aspect 12: Land and housing initiatives

In Swansea, the City Council is persuading the building societies to release mortgages to unemployed people, to allow them to proceed with self-build operations to construct their own houses. This is just one example of what can be achieved.

People living on council estates, which usually have higher than normal rates of unemployment, need to be able to use empty properties to establish resource centres, teenage centres, crafts workshops and women's centres. This means loosening housing policy guidelines to permit community representatives to participate in debates over the future use of empty estate properties.

Where councils own vacant or waste land locally, consideration should be given to the possible uses of this land by unemployed people, for the development of allotments or smallholdings. Local land policies could also be established to maximize the constructive use of all vacant land.

First steps

Forming local networks to unite everyone concerned is the first step towards the development of an integrated strategy.

At the agency level, it is common to find that staff at jobcentres, careers offices, youth offices, unemployment centres, enterprise agencies and DHSS offices, all of whom are dealing with problems of unemployment, do not even know each other,

let alone spend time together discussing their common problems and ideas. Waste of effort occurs because of this simple failure of communication. We believe that a new infrastructure is needed to allow better communication among departments and agencies. This has already been done in other parts of Britain with success.

A local network can begin to pull together people who want to develop ambitious and co-ordinated strategies for local employment.

The beginnings of such networks exist in Plymouth and Exeter. They are needed in every centre in the two counties where unemployment is a major issue. The strength of the local network is that it can develop schemes and projects which are relevant to the locality: no one else can possibly know what is required.

Recommendations for action

The necessary paradox of a bottom-up approach to local development is that there is no central agency "up there" to which direct policy suggestions can be referred. The local network is a model that can serve as the starting point for any group, agency or council, in any town, rural area or city. Unless the local soil is tilled, the seeds will not take root.

If the type of proposals CADURN is putting forward are not met with a positive response, the next step might be a series of meetings with concerned groups and agencies.

Local initiative must be complemented by regional initiative. The CADURN strategy therefore sees the need for an integrated regional strategy.

The two counties of Cornwall and Devon have the advantage of being clearly defined historically, culturally and geographically. This enables a clearer regional identity to develop than is the case in, say, Herefordshire, or even Somerset.

One suggestion in the proposed regional strategy is that the major colleges of the region -- Exeter University, Rolle College, Plymouth Polytechnic, the College of St. Mark and St. John, Cornwall College of Further Education, and Bicton and Seale Hayne Colleges -- could offer their technical and scientific resources to serve the needs of new and existing businesses in the two counties. In London, new technology networks are pioneering ways in which colleges can help, through product development and scientific research. The same could be done here.

National policy

It is not our aim to discuss the kind of changes which might be desirable at the level of national policies toward unemployment and unemployed people. Rather, the ideas discussed here can be achieved by local effort, regardless of what occurs at Westminster.

It is our view, however, that a strong regional strategy would command respect from other parts of the country. Furthermore, it would enable individuals and groups who see

it as their business to wage war on unemployment to speak with added strength and conviction when arguing for changes, both broad and detailed, in different areas of government policy-making.

CADURN's own role

As a network of groups and initiatives working directly "on the coal-face," CADURN has its own role to play in the development of local and regional strategies.

But CADURN's own resources are minimal. It is hoped that during the course of 1985/1986, CADURN will be able to secure the funds for two development workers. This will allow the network to act on its ideas in conjunction with the other groups and agencies we have discussed.

CADURN is well-placed to provide quick feedback on new crises as they affect unemployed people directly, such as the chaos being caused by the May 1985 board and lodging rulings from the DHSS. Cohesive local and regional networks could provide practical on-the-ground responses to such periodic crises, and clear, constructive criticism to government whenever this is required.

We are living at a time of major cultural and economic change, both nationally and globally. After 200 years, the industrial age is waning.

If we respond to the challenges of change with a positive heart and a lively vision of our potential as human beings, we may live to be amazed with what we see.

But we are sitting on a minefield. Younger generations are growing up with new dreams and a new instinct for what the future might bring. When this energy is not permitted creative expression, it turns inward on itself, destructively. Unemployment is one of the worst influences on young people. Whether they are on the dole or still at school, unemployment is subtly undermining their sense of the future. We must not allow the illusion of rural tranquillity in Cornwall and Devon to lull us into lethargy.

Our work of tackling the problems of unemployment is not just "fire-fighting." We cannot and do not want to try to return to the stability of the 1950s. All around us, major forces are exerting their influence in the world, from the East-West arms race to the North-South debt race, from the destruction of our earth's topsoil to the erosion of our own inner stability and peace. We do not wish to re-invent the past. We must invent the future, and we must do so in a way that will allow everyone to live with hope and dignity.

CADURN believes that our struggle to overcome the senselessness of unemployment and to create a more fulfilling, balanced and meaningful life in the two counties of Cornwall and Devon, is also part of a wider effort to build a better world, in which we will be able to express our deepest and most noble qualities.

We all need to dream. The achievements of the past 50 years realized the dreams of our

great-grandparents. The achievements of the year 2035 could likewise realize our dreams, if we so choose.

APPENDIX

OUR CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS

1. There has always been an assumption that individuals can depend upon employers to provide them with work.

   a. There is now an assumption that individuals will need to learn to organize their own work and life patterns.

2. There has always been an assumption that an individual can be confident of a steady and secure job or career for life.

   a. There is now an assumption that we must develop confidence in our ability to change, to learn new skills, and to find our own paths in life.

3. At school, personal resourcefulness and enterprise have generally been viewed as potentially disruptive and not to be encouraged.

   a. Personal resourcefulness and enterprise are now viewed as essential qualities that we will need for the future.

4. Education has generally been seen as a preparation for a steady job or career.

a. Education is now seen as being a preparation for a lively, changing, and unpredictable life.

5. Education (in Britain) has always been geared to produce a significant number of people who leave school without qualifications, to work in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.

   a. Education is now being geared to develop everyone's ability to be self-motivated and multi-skilled.

6. Training has been geared to a "one trade per life" assumption.

   a. Training is now considered as something that must be constantly available whenever it is needed.

7. Working life was always assumed to continue steadily on a weekly and yearly basis, until retirement.

   a. Working life is now assumed to be something marked by frequent change, with a variety of working patterns available.

8. Unemployment has always been viewed as a temporary passing misfortune, or as personal laziness.

a. Unemployment is beginning to be viewed as a potentially useful period away from full-time work, and as a chance to pause, think, and redirect.

9. Local business has always been viewed as being able to look after itself, and as quietly looking after its own interests.

a. Local business is now viewed as a community asset, and as being in need of support and assistance, especially for start-ups.

10. Business skills have always been viewed as something you are either born with, or pick up from friends and relatives.

a. Business skills are now viewed as something that can be fostered and encouraged from school onwards.

11. The local community has been viewed simply as the place where you live between working hours.

a. The local community is now viewed as a place where work, home-life, leisure and community life can all intermingle.

12. The local economy has been viewed as something that just ticks along on its own.

a. The local economy is now viewed as something needing attention and appropriate policy-making.

13. There has been an assumption that the prime purpose of life is material gain, and that work has been the main way to achieve it.

a. There is now a growing understanding that material gain is only one part of life, and that for many people, it may not be the most important part.

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SMALL IS POSSIBLE: TOWARDS A HUMAN-SCALE TECHNOLOGY

George McRobie

Framing this paper are two stories that illustrate different aspects of "top-down" development, and why it does not work.

The first is a story about Fritz Schumacher, an eminent economist, originally from Germany, who worked for a big public corporation in Britain. He decided to go on a holiday. Where better to go than the north of Scotland, especially Banffshire. On the first morning, as Schumacher was walking around the side of a mountain, he suddenly and unexpectedly came face to face with God. In one sense, it was unusual because I understand that God does not normally manifest Himself to economists, but on the other hand, it was absolutely normal, because God was after all in His own country, one might say. The economist recovered himself very quickly and said: "Lord, Lord, is it true that what is only a minute to you is a million years to us?" God said: "Yes, you are quite right, why do you ask?" "Oh," said the economist, "by analogy Lord, is it true that what is only a penny to you is a million pounds to us?" "Absolutely right, my boy," said God,

"absolutely right". The economist said: "Lord, lend me a penny." And so the Lord said: "Certainly, my dear chap, certainly." He began feeling about his robes and said: "Well, I am terribly sorry, I seem to have come out without any change. I will have to go back and get some. Would you mind waiting a minute?"

That is the story of development, and particularly third world development in its conventional form. During the past 20 years I have been concerned with a less conventional approach to development and one which is much more effective. This is the appropriate technology approach.

The appropriate technology movement began in 1965, when a few of us helped E.F. Schumacher to form the Intermediate Technology Group in London. Our aim was to identify, develop, make known and help to introduce technologies within the reach of poor people in poor communities. Most Western technology was bypassing the rural poor, going into the cities and, in fact, aggravating the problems of city growth and rural decay. Almost any big technology that is put in the city, in a poor country, will compete with and destroy something that people are already trying to do outside the city. So, it is not only that Western technologies are very expensive, load the poor countries with debt, and make them dependent upon the rich; in many cases they actually harm the poor people in the rural areas, although they enrich some people in the cities. It is part of the creation of a dual society.

The Intermediate Technology Group started with no money and with only 20 or 30 people. Initially we encouraged engineers to develop simple technologies. We got many enquiries for help and advice, and one of our earliest was a request from Zambia, asking for details of an improved animal harness. To give you an idea of how naive we were at the time, we said, who knows about an animal harness? The War Office, we decided, because they must have manuals on the harnessing of mules and oxen from the various overseas wars that were fought by the British, on a fairly regular basis. So I asked the War Office if they had manuals on the subject. And they said, yes, but the information is classified. To which I wrote back and said I could quite understand this, because another Boer War could break out any minute and then this information might very well get into the hands of the enemy. We never did get their information, but fortunately there were other, less secret sources.

As time went on, we managed to identify and develop a whole series of very interesting technologies. The first thing we had to do was to prove that technology is not some sort of unidirectional force. Western experience was that technology was getting bigger and bigger, and more complex, and more expensive. But we reversed that trend, and showed that you could make efficient technologies that were small and simple, saving capital and energy, doing minimum damage to the environment, and using people's skills instead of bypassing them.

One of the first projects we tackled was in the field of building materials. One of my

early colleagues, John Parry, showed that one could scale down the big modern brickworks from about two million bricks a week to about 10 thousand a week. He made it so small in the end, that it could be loaded in the back of a Landrover and moved from village to village. Here was a technology that was both small, and produced a good quality product. Of course, it required energy and, in many areas, energy was scarce. So, John Parry moved to using sun-dried bricks, but putting over them a skin of cement mixed with fiber, giving a very powerful compact wall with high thermal insulation qualities. Currently Devon County Council in England is testing a couple of these buildings to see if the technique could be applied to low-cost housing in Britain.

The group then turned to consider cement. We found that cement plants now average two thousand tons a day. There are relatively few of them, because there are very few enormous deposits of limestone, so that cement is commonly hauled hundreds of miles to its point of use. Working with the Indians and with the Germans (who developed the technology of small-scale plants during World War II to disperse the plants widely and avoid Allied bombing), we finally developed a 25 tons a day plant that can use local materials, which the big cement plants cannot use. In the course of redesigning the plant, we found that a more efficient form of heat transfer could be used, and for that and other reasons the cost per ton of this cement is lower than that of the big cement plant. The Appropriate Technology Development Association in India and Appropriate Technology International of the

USA are currently running final tests on this mini-cement plant.

This is one of several cases when big companies said it was impossible to make mini-plants, and they have been proved wrong. Another instance occurred when Schumacher was asked by President Kaounda of Zambia if we could produce a small eggtray-making machine, using waste paper as raw material. (Zambia was then exporting waste paper to South Africa and importing eggtrays from South Africa). It took the Group some four years of hard work, but we finally made it.

We found that the monopoly of making these eggtrays was held by an American company with its headquarters in Denmark (no doubt for reasons which Galbraith calls "creative accounting") and they assured us it was absolutely impossible to make a small-scale plant. Their standard plant cost 750,000 pounds ($1.5 million) and produced a million eggtrays a month. A million eggtrays a month would have swamped Zambia, covered Zambia over totally with eggtrays. Zambia wanted half-a-million a year.

With the assistance of a postgraduate design student at the Royal College of Art, and the University of Reading, we finally produced a plant which made half-a-million eggtrays a year and today there are about 60 such machines working in developing countries. The American company, having first told us that it was impossible to make a small machine, later came along and offered to help us market them.

There are in fact three ways of arriving at appropriate small-scale technology: start with the very big and scale it down, which usually means redesigning it completely; or take the very primitive and simple, and upgrade it, making it more productive, but not putting it beyond the reach of poor people; or, thirdly, inventing something quite new to suit local needs and resources. In the instances of cement and sugar we scaled down the very big plant to a fraction of its former size, and used the best technologies we could find to make them as efficient as the big plant. Thus the small-scale sugar factories now being built in India are one-fortieth the size of a big plant; these 40 small units employ 10 times more people than a big plant, and they produce two-and-a-half times more sugar. The small plant is both more productive and more socially advantageous. It starts the process of accumulating capital and generating income in the locality.

I lived in India for a couple of years, in Hyderabad, and the only crop grown in a nearby area was rice. The rice season ran from May to October. At the end of the season many people, especially the young, migrated out, to Hyderabad, to Bangalore, to Madras, and many of them never came back. It was an area in the process of disintegration. Then a small-scale sugar plant was built. It happens that the sugar season runs from October to May. The addition of a small-scale sugar plant, owned by local people, meant continuous work throughout the year for a large number of people in the community. The capital cost of the mini-plant was relatively low, and it employed a

lot of labour, so the amount of the total income that accrued to capital was relatively small, while the amount accruing to labour was relatively large.

This is worth remembering today, in our own countries, when we are told of the miracles of robotization. What is, in fact, happening is that the owners of capital will receive a higher and higher portion of the total income, as fewer and fewer people are employed.

It is in the field of energy that the Group developed some of its most interesting new technologies. About seven or eight years ago one of our teams was working at Reading University on a small vertical axis windmill. They had the idea of turning it upside down and putting it in the river Thames. This was done, and after some re-design work they found that they had invented a very powerful river turbine. A little three-foot diameter turbine of this kind, if you put it under water, produces the same power as a 60-foot diameter water-wheel.

Most appropriate technologies will tend to be small, so that their capacity is appropriate to small markets; and simple, so that they can be operated by people without highly sophisticated technical, organizational or financial skills. They will also be capital-saving, because poor countries are short of capital; and they should also be non-violent to people, that is, they should develop people's skills instead of deskilling them; and they should be non-violent to the environment by using renewable resources as much as possible.

It was not long before people in the rich countries began saying to our group in London, "but we too need a different sort of technology if we are to survive." It started off in the Maritimes, followed by the west of Scotland and the Appalachian Mountains, and southern Italy, and then all the other poor areas of rich countries began to take more and more interest.

Then came a major change in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This really amounted to a growing recognition that modern industrial society was on a collision course with the environment, with its resource base, and with people. After Rachel Carson had written her excellent book, Silent Spring, a growing number of scientists began to address the same question: whether our existing modern, conventional technology could be permitted to play havoc with the environment very much longer. For most the answer was no. Today we have, in our own countries, a technology that is, in many respects, on a collision course with the environment. Now, people are becoming increasingly aware of this, and we are beginning to compel big industry to assume the costs of its environmental damage. Previously, if you had effluent you poured it into a river and that was it. It should be noted that the bigger and more remotely-controlled the company, the easier it is to get away with this.

My friend Johan Galtung once suggested that one way of ensuring that people did not damage the environment was by making sure that the management of the factory producing effluent drank the water downstream from the factory. This would very quickly

clean up that particular problem, but management usually finds that it can live somewhere else. Like another form of "pollution," highrise blocks in London, you find the architects who designed them all living in elegant, Georgian houses in Kew while highrise residents are going mad in their monstrous blocks.

But in terms of environmental pollution, there is at least a growing public awareness and concern. Governments are still playing for time, carrying out further studies and claiming that research is needed. In other words, engaging in the normal evasive action that governments take before they are compelled to do something.

About 10 years ago I happened to be in Norway when I met a group of people who said, would you please take these pamphlets and distribute them to all of your friends in the House of Commons, because we know that it is effluent from your factory chimneys that is destroying our lakes. I did that and it had very little effect, but gradually the Norwegians persuaded Germany, Poland, and Britain that it was effluent from their power stations and steelworks that was killing off thousands of lakes in Norway. At first, the British government did what any normal government would do and said it is not us, it is the Germans; we know that for a fact. And then the Norwegians proved it was us as well and we said, well, yes, it is us, but it is too expensive to do anything about it. The British government commissioned a study of acid rain in the north of England and the south of Scotland, and the results were so alarming that they prudently did not publish

it. The Norwegians got hold of this report and said, we know that times are hard in Britain, you are a bit short of money, to save you the money, we will publish it. And it was published very quickly thereafter.

We know only too well what is happening now to groundwater, to soil, to air all over the industrialized world. In the east of England from time to time, health officers announce warnings to mothers not to give their children tapwater because there are high concentrations of nitrates in the water, which can produce blue babies under certain circumstances.

Even if we stopped pouring nitrogen onto the soil today, the process will continue for many years, because these nitrates are slowly reaching the water table over a long period of time.

So the problem of environmental pollution is entering public consciousness and gradually entering government consciousness. Note how the American and Canadian governments are trying to avoid the issue of acid rain. Behind all this looms the problems that have no technical "fix." By putting in scrubbing devices and fluidized bed combustion, the amount of effluent can be reduced; it can be reduced even more with a policy of energy conservation which eliminates the source of pollution. And this is also slowly entering public consciousness. Amory Lovins has shown that, beyond any shadow of doubt, it is now far cheaper to save energy than to produce more of it.

Yet so long as we burn hydrocarbons in the air, we add to the "greenhouse effect," the

carbon dioxide accumulation in the atmosphere. This is already going to change our climate. Nobody is absolutely sure how, but it is not going to be to our benefit. There is also the appalling prospect of accumulating quantities of radioactive waste. We must be the first generation that has said, to hell with future generations, what have they ever done for us. We have handed them problems that we, ourselves, cannot solve. The next generation will have to deal with these problems. Though they did not ask for nuclear power, they will have to decide how to dispose of nuclear power stations and how to dispose of radioactive waste. Decisions, in short, that we will have forced on them.

On the resources front there is not yet the same awarenes that we are on a collision course with the world's stock of non-renewable resources. And it really is extraordinary when you realize that it is the industrial leaders of the West, who pride themselves on their commercial acumen, the "bottom line" and all that, it is these men who have been guilty of a basic confusion which if made by a real businessman, would land him in jail. They have confused capital with income, they have confused the non-renewable capital of oil, with the income flow of renewable energy. The two are very different; one is capital, the other is income. In Newfoundland today I find local people grappling with the problem of how to persuade the oil companies and government to take a small fraction of the oil revenues, which they treat as income, and apply it to making something permanent on the island for the future. Consider how a tiny fraction of that revenue

put into a fund now, in 10 years would be bigger than the Ford Foundation, and could be used for developing renewable sources of energy which would last forever on the island, long after the oil has been forgotten.

I did try this idea, as applied to North Sea oil, on a British Minister of Energy whom I knew, an ex-Coal Board man, Eric Varley. But by that time he was so far in the grip of his senior civil servants, that he wrote me a long, garbled letter saying you cannot do this sort of thing with oil revenues, and in any case Her Majesty's Government were not sure they believed in renewable energy. This occurred 15 years ago and I often wonder what sort of economy we would have today if we had built up a fund to develop renewable sources of energy. We would be, among other things, the world leader in renewable energy of all kinds, except perhaps solar energy, because we are not so hot on solar energy in Scotland -- though we are well endowed with wind and water power sources.

Blindly, we still contrive to avoid our resource-base problem. Since we now believe that cheap oil is back again, we think we have broken OPEC. Heaven help us if we have, because OPEC was forcing us to conserve oil. Instead, we rush to grab any oil we find as quickly as we can, maximizing the income now, because in our economics, income flow now is worth vastly more than income flow in 20 years time. Applied to non-renewable resources, that is utter hogwash: why should a ton of oil today be more valuable to us than a ton of oil to our great-great-grandchildren?

Probably, it will be worth much more to them than it is to us. But our method of calculating the cost puts a premium on consumption now, not on consumption in the future.

On the human front, we are beginning to see very serious drawbacks to the technology that seemed to serve us so well until the unemployment of the past few years. Technology carries its own culture with it, but that culture does not include concepts of fairness or social justice. In the late 1960s most Western societies went through a process where large numbers of people, particularly the more oppressed -- women, garbage workers, many lowly-paid groups -- began to say, "look, we are also important, we are part of society." Society is so integrated today, you cannot say anyone is really more important than anyone else, as the garbage workers once proved when they stopped collecting garbage in London and other cities in the U.K. Very soon people were begging them to go back to work, at much higher wages, because we found they were essential. At that time, a university lecturer in Glasgow wrote angry letters to the newspapers saying that it was utterly deplorable that the garbagemen were getting paid more than university lecturers. The garbageman's union responded quickly and said, although we have a closed shop rule, we will relax it to allow into our ranks any university lecturer who wishes to change his job. But apparently very few, if any, took advantage of this offer.

One of the greatest mistakes made by the Thatcher government in Britain was the disbanding of the Commission on Prices and

Incomes, because as a society we have to get together more and more and agree on who is paid what for doing what. We cannot really continue on the basis that people are paid what the ruling class think they should be paid. We have to make a more reasonable evaluation of payment for different sorts of work. What should differentials be? Does anything justify that the highest paid should get 10, 20, even 50 times more than the lowest?

We have not really come to grips with the human consequences of technological change, though we are beginning to. The human impact of technological change has long been recognized. Indeed there is clear recognition in the writings of Karl Marx and Adam Smith that a growing subdivision of labour results in the deskilling of workers and creates people less and less capable of taking decisions. This effect of technology has been deplored by eminent thinkers throughout our history, starting with Marx and his contemporary, David Urquhart, a Scotsman, who said: "The subdivision of labour is the assassination of a people." Pretty good stuff for the early nineteenth century. In fact, we are only coming around to that view now, since in the name of higher productivity, we have assumed that what happens to people is incidental to the greater enterprise of ever more production. People such as Ruskin and Morris, Kropotkin, Cole, Ghandi, Mao, Schumacher, Rozak and many others, have all been asking this question: what does work do to people? We do not really need to look too far to find the answer. Through technology we have said to people, "Do not think, your job is to simply be an adjunct to the machine; at all

costs do not try and exercise initiative, all the initiative has been built into the machine. Do not plan ahead, because you may have to change your status in relation to the machine at any time, as we develop new machines. Do not plan for the future, because the future is uncertain, technology may change at any time and you have got to change with it." That is what we have said to people at work. Yet to the same person, man or woman, we say, "As a citizen, wife, husband, father, think ahead, plan for the future, exercise initiative." The result is that we tear people apart. You cannot tell people in half their lives to do one thing and in the other half, to do the opposite. So it is no accident that in Britain we have as many hospital beds occupied by mentally sick patients as we have by physically sick patients.

Our industrial system has progressively deskilled people and made them more and more insecure over a long period of time. We have tried to compensate for certain kinds of insecurity. We discovered that our economic system was subject to fluctuations, booms and slumps. We introduced various social payments to alleviate at least a major part of the damage done to people by industrial society. The whole welfare structure is part of the system of making a particular form of capitalism work. It was part of the whole Keynesian system which for a few decades kept Western economies relatively stable and fully employed. That lasted for a short time, because under environmental and resource constraints, and under conditions of increasingly fierce international competition, large-scale industry in Western countries is no longer

capable of ensuring anything like full employment. Big industry continues to get rid of people all the time in the interest of efficiency. So the record of conventional industry in relation to people is rather grim. First of all it deskills people, and then it says to them, we do not want you at all.

We tend to take technological change as something inevitable, an act of God. I take the view of a Scottish jury that heard a case about a man found badly beaten up in a ditch. They passed the verdict "an act of God, under very suspicious circumstances." That is how we should regard technology; if it is an act of God, it is an act of God under very suspicious circumstances.

Many years ago, when I was a young man working in the coal-mines, I lived through a very interesting period when you could see the effect of technological change upon people and workplaces. Originally coal mining was done virtually by family units, each working its own section underground. It was hard work, but also very skilled work.

The next stage was that of semi-mechanization which took away the skill and substituted a three-shift cycle of operations, where one shift came in and undercut the coal; the next shift came in and blasted it down; the third shift came in and, symbolically perhaps, kneeling in front of a moving belt shoveled six to eight tons of coal onto the belt and got out as fast as they could. All interest and skill had been taken out of the work; only the danger and the grind was left. If you can imagine a

three-shift cycle of operations that compels one shift to finish its job before the next one can come on, coupled with a piece-rate system of payment, you can see how this created maximum friction among the men. A great deal of the strife inside coal-mines arose from this technology. Then, purely for production reasons, not because they saw the human dimension, the Coal Board, as part of its massive and highly successful program of upgrading the technology of the industry, introduced a system of continuous working where one machine could move up and down the coal-face, taking a web of coal off each time. A small team operated the machine. They could rotate their jobs and they could stop the machine at any point they wanted to allow the next shift to take over. Internal dissension virtually disappeared from collieries. You could almost certainly correlate this with the number of strikes in the industry, because men, being reasonable human beings, will often translate arguments that they have among themselves into arguments that they have with management.

Technology has a profound effect on how we live, and when you come down to it, technology affects every single aspect of our lives. The large-scale, centralized technology we have today determines where we live, how we work, where we go to school, who our friends are since most of our friends are made at work; and even what we eat, because technology has taken over that as well.

In almost every respect, we are affected by the particular kind of technological

development which was made possible by cheap oil.

Oil is a very mobile and very concentrated form of hydrocarbons. It can be moved about very easily. The growth of cities with their mass markets made it possible to concentrate production in bigger and bigger units. If you look at our form of civilization today, or perhaps if somebody came here from another planet and looked at us, they would likely wonder at the fact that with the vast area of land in North America, people seem to prefer concentrating themselves, like insects, into vast cities.

This is only made possible by cheap oil. It enables both the cost effective transportation of people and goods over vast distances, and the production of huge quantities of food by machinery requiring minimal labour input. We did this by throwing capital and energy at agriculture. I am sure the ratio in Canada is the same as it is in Britain, namely, that in terms of energy, for every unit of energy we produce as food, we use three units of oil energy to produce it. Whatever else that may be, it is not a permanent system of agriculture. This is quite apart from the damage we are doing to the soil, the soil structure, and to the food itself by pouring chemicals onto it. It is far from a reassuring thought that the activity which produces our food is by far the greatest user of deadly poisons, herbicides and pesticides.

On all three counts -- environmental, resource, and human -- we need to find a different approach to our technology. We need to find a technology that is not so

violent to the environment. We may not even be able to live without doing some damage, but let us minimize it. Renewable energy would be one way as would using as little energy as possible. If you really want to halt nuclear power, cut down your use of electricity. There are enormous possibilities here. Britains use twice as much energy per unit of national output as do the Scandinavians, for example. Anyone who says that if we use less energy, our standard of living must fall, is talking rubbish. The Scandinavians have a standard of living every bit as high as we have and they use half as much energy as we do for everything they produce on a comparative basis.

We also need, on environmental and resource conservation grounds, to turn to renewable sources of raw material, and increasingly to substitute skill and intelligence for capital and energy. Such technologies are already on their way. The motor vehicles now being designed by the Japanese, the Germans and the Koreans, will run for between 80 and 100 miles per gallon. This is an application of skill and creativity, replacing the prodigal use of energy and capital.

Amory Lovins, author of the brilliant book Soft Energy Paths, recently said that if the USA raised the efficiency of its motor vehicles from the present average of 17 miles per gallon to 60 miles per gallon, it would become totally independent of Middle East oil. Think of the effects of that, because as things now stand, as soon as the Middle East blows up, America will be in there fighting (along with Europe) to protect their vital oil supply interests.

Concerning the terms of energy saving, we could do a great deal to safeguard the environment and the world's stock of non-renewable resources. What is quite certain is that we cannot continue along the path we are on; nor can we export this technology to developing countries. If the developing countries started using fossil fuels on anything like the per capita scale that we do, the world would become polluted to the point of being uninhabitable within a matter of years.

Yet this is the technology we are still peddling to poor countries under the name of "aid". Most aid, of course, is simply a market-creating process. We give money to developing countries to buy our most expensive technology. We think that this is doing us good, but we are wrong. It is damaging to developing countries, and is against our own long-term interests.

Much of what I am saying can be summed up in the proposition that we need to find ways of living a more ecologically-balan .d life. One example of this approach is contained in the book, **The Sane Alternative**, in which James Robertson advocates a future based on sane, humane, ecological principles. If mankind is to survive, we have to find ways of fitting into, instead of destroying, the eco-system of our planet.

As part of the process of developing a sustainable life-style, we study ecology a great deal. It is now a respectable branch of science. But we should broaden the definition of ecology to include not only the nature of planet and animal systems and their interrelationships, but also the

nature of human systems and their interrelationships. Everyone would agree that work is of central importance in human life. Thus a starting point for human ecology would be to study the nature of work; the social organization of work; and the geographical distribution of work. What is our view of the function of work, and how has this view changed over time? Is it really true, as the economists tell us, that work is just a cost, a necessary cost of producing goods? Insofar as economists have given attention to work, that has been their conclusion. The conclusion that work is a cost is an important one; because what do you do with a cost but reduce it as much as possible, and if you can, eliminate it altogether. This eliminates people from production of all kinds.

But Schumacher and many others have said, look, there are many other functions of work. One obvious function of work is to produce necessary goods and services. Of course, this almost goes without saying, but many of the goods and services we now produce are not necessary and are damaging. Another function of work is to socialize people, to enable people to work together, to help the collaborative instinct in people instead of the egocentric instinct.

A third function of work might be to develop people's creative skills to the highest point of which they are capable. (This is the traditional Scottish view of education, that the purpose of education is to develop everyone's skills to the highest level that the individual can attain. That view has long since disappeared as we have

adopted the English system of education, but that is a different issue.)

Consequently, it is important to study the nature of work, since under the impact of our particular system of economics, aided and abetted by our particular system of technology, we have degraded the idea of work to the point that we think the only function of work is to produce more and more; more goods, irrespective of their quality, without regard to the product or to the manner of its production.

There is a parallel here in the conventional view of the nature and purpose of agriculture. City people have a very narrow view of what agriculture is about. Most urban dwellers believe that the sole function of agriculture is to produce cheap food for the city, irrespective of quality. However, women's magazines are getting more and more interested in the question of the increase in poisonous chemicals in food and in the idea that children's bodies are becoming storehouses of chemicals.

In contrast to the city view of agriculture, it could be argued that agriculture, like work in manufacturing, also has several functions: to produce wholesome, safe, food; to preserve a safe and adequate water table; to preserve genetic variety; to improve the soil for future generations; even, perhaps, to maintain beauty and amenity in the countryside. But these wider ends are always lost sight of in the narrow functions of a system solely concerned with the production of goods and services as cheaply and in as large a quantity as possible.

We need, then, to look again at what we really mean by work. David Ross and Peter Usher, in their book, **From the Roots Up: Economic Development As If Community Mattered**, look at this question: what is useful work, is it only what is paid for? We now know that without a vast quantity of unpaid work, society would seize up altogether. If women decided that they had to be paid every time they looked after family or cooked a meal, the whole process would fall apart.

Another aspect of human ecology would be the social organization of work. Our person from another planet would have a look around and say, good grief, you do not really mean that your principal method of organizing work is to achieve the maximum private appropriation of wealth? The principle of limited liability, but limitless profits, suits those individuals who possess capital but what about forms of organization which enable workers to acquire and own capital? The chief alternative, state enterprise, is indistinguishable from private ownership in most of the ways it operates. It does eliminate the private appropriation of wealth from certain areas of human activity, but in practice it has few other advantages over private ownership.

We need to look at ways of organizing work to bring out the qualities of human creativity and skill, and human satisfaction, in work. In other words, we need to start focusing on people, not on the machine, as the producer. There are many ways in which we could civilize work. The workers' cooperative is one; community cooperatives is another; as well as

production units owned by schools, universities and housewives. When you break the idea of ownership out of the mold of the private corporation or the state corporation, all sorts of ownership structures become possible.

It is also important to decentralize and diversify the ownership of productive assets from a political standpoint. The growing concentration of economic power during the past few decades has meant a growing concentration of political power and a growing authoritarianism. We need a redistribution of economic and therefore political power.

A third aspect of human ecology would be the geographical distribution of work. Must we concentrate all our activities in cities? Instead, we should distribute our activities more evenly throughout the country, cutting out long transport hauls and thereby, cutting down our dependence on oil; creating more self-reliant communities, building up local production to meet local needs.

As transport costs are likely to rise faster than all other costs, we will increasingly find it economic as well as socially more advantageous to start recreating more relatively self-contained and certainly more self-reliant communities.

We began by looking at appropriate technologies -- low-cost, small, simple, capital saving, and non-violent -- for poor countries. But a growing number of people are now concluding that in industrialized countries we need to develop technologies with similar characteristics. They are not saying we need the same technologies, but

that we need technologies with very much the same characteristics; human-scale, non-violent technologies that will enable us to move towards what we assuredly do not have at present, namely, sustainable life-support systems either in industry or agriculture.

My concluding story about development is a sort of allegory. A small person is climbing up the side of a very steep mountain and just as he gets to the top, a minor avalanche sweeps him down to within two feet of an enormous crevasse, thousands of feet deep. He just saves himself by holding on to a little tree, growing in the side of the mountain. He shouts to the top of the mountain: "Help, help, can anyone help me, is anyone there?" After a moment, an enormous voice comes from the top of the mountain and says: "Yes, I can help you. I am the Lord almighty, I control the skies and the earth, and the water beneath the earth. Have faith in me and I will help you. Do you have faith in me?" "Yes, yes, Lord, but only help me." "Very well," said the voice, "I will help you. First of all, demonstrate your faith: let go of the tree." There was a very long silence, and then the little voice said: "Is there anyone else up there?"

Today we are all looking for that someone else, for the alternative to the giant corporations of the centralized economy. And more and more of us are convinced that the alternative is to be found in making our local communities more self-reliant.

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